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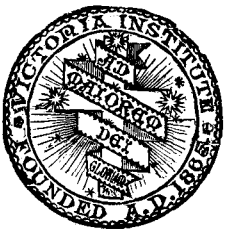

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1925

679TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,

HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL, WESTMINSTER, S.W. 1, ON MONDAY, MAY 18TH, 1925, AT 4.30 P.M.

THE REV. CHARLES GARDNER, M.A., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed and signed, and the HON. SECRETARY announced the election, as Associate, of W. Herbert Phillipps, Esq., Knight of the Order of Leopold; also, on behalf of the Council, to their great regret, the death of Mr. William Dale, a Member of the Council, who has read papers before the Institute, and taken part with acceptance in our discussions.

The CHAIRMAN then called on Professor H. Wildon Carr, D.Litt., to read his paper.

A REVIEW OF PHILOSOPHIC TENDENCIES SINCE HEGEL.

By PROFESSOR H. WILDON CARR, D.Litt.

HEGEL died in 1831, after one day's illness, a victim of the first European cholera epidemic. He was in his sixty-second year and at the height of his intellectual achievement. In the years immediately following his death his fame as a philosopher and the influence of his philosophy spread throughout the intellectual world. During his active working years his influence had been largely confined to the class-room, and the works published by himself in his lifetime were too severe in form to appeal to any but the expert. These were, besides some early critical works, the *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, the *Encyclopaedie der Wissenschaften philosophischen* and the *Grundlinien der Rechtsphilosophie*. They constitute the Hegelian system, but they all retained the form of rigorously logical treatises, and, except the first, were practically the text-books which served him as the matter for his discourses to his students. After his death his pupils and friends, among them his two sons, at once combined to issue a complete collected edition of his works.

The *Logik* and the *Rechtsphilosophie* were now published, no longer in their bare propositional form, but with the Ersätze or lecture notes compiled from Hegel's own memoranda and from students' notebooks, and courses of lectures on the Philosophy of History, on Aesthetics, on the Philosophy of Religion, on the History of Philosophy and on Pædagogy, together with such essays and reviews and private letters as were available, were added. The result was that Hegel rapidly came to fill the place in the modern world which we assign to Plato or to Aristotle in the ancient. To his followers he appeared to gather up into himself all the wealth of the speculation of the modern period and to enshrine it in a comprehensive system, to express, as no one had yet succeeded in expressing, the universality of reason and the reign of mind in the realm of nature. What is yet stranger is that, as we look back and see him through the perspective of a hundred years, his grandeur and unique philosophical eminence suffer no diminution.

While the Hegelian philosophy assumed a position which no philosophy seemed to have aspired to before, it yet presented itself as no new thing, no new revelation or enlightenment, but as the direct outcome of the past. It was not a New Jerusalem descending out of Heaven from God, it was the Kingdom of Heaven proclaimed because now the fullness of time had come. Viewed from without, it appears as the paradoxical attempt to deduce the real universe by thinking it; viewed from within, it appears as thought attaining consciousness of its own activity and realizing its creative power. "There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so." And just as the Kantian philosophy had seemed to gather into itself the dogmatism of the seventeenth century and the empiricism of the eighteenth and to enrich thought with a new and higher synthesis, so Hegel, in making explicit the inherent contradiction in the Kantian philosophy and grasping the principle of an effective dialectic, seemed to have attained the crowning achievement, to have resolved the problems of the ancient and of the modern speculation, to have reduced chaos to order and vindicated the rationality of the real. "The real is the rational and the rational is the real."

Hegel's philosophy is the first of the great philosophies of evolution. Evolution as Hegel presents it is creative, yet it is not a time process. The active agency behind evolution is logical process, and logic is not temporal but eternal. It affirms,

however, the urge of a force behind reason which is not that of a blind will to live, but a force inherent in rational expression itself.

The Hegelian system was not without its Achilles heel. This was the nature-philosophy which it enthroned above the sciences. And yet the vulnerability of the system at this point can hardly be said to have been even suspected—it certainly was not disclosed—by the philosophical opponents who criticized Hegel from his own standpoint of post-Kantian transcendental idealism. The bitterest of his opponents was Schopenhauer. To-day, however, Schopenhauer's principle is regarded as not essentially different from the Hegelian. The powerful reaction which for half a century was to overwhelm the Hegelian position originated in an entirely different quarter. It was the strong affirmation of positive science involving the rejection of the whole conception of nature-philosophy, it was Comte and positivism, followed by the great generalization of biology and the advance of the physical and natural sciences, which turned the intellectual attention of humanity in a new direction.

Nearly all Hegelians, whether they are Hegelians of the right or Hegelians of the left, treat the *Naturphilosophie* as negligible. Without disclaiming it or denying the importance which Hegel himself attached to it, they regard it as quite unessential to his system, and as unimportant so far as the principle of the dialectic itself is concerned. In one of the most recent and sympathetic expositions of Hegel, an enthusiastic follower, Mr. W. T. Stace, boldly proposes to throw it over as an encumbrance, and contends that the system gains in stability and self-consistency by the sacrifice. This is impossible. When every allowance is made which can be made for the state of science in Hegel's lifetime, when every possible defence is put forward for the special scientific conceptions and theories which Hegel tenaciously held, it remains true that the success of his dialectic as a philosophical method depends on the passage from thought to reality, from logic as subjective activity to nature as objective law. If physical science and the reality to which it applies are placed out of bounds of the Hegelian philosophy, and if each is considered as independent and free to develop in its own way, it will not be long before the Hegelian philosophy is discarded as useless. On the other hand, it by no means follows because Hegel's judgment was at fault and he himself incompetent and definitely wrong in his formulation of particular scientific theories that the principle of his nature-philosophy is not fundamentally and universally true. This

principle is that the reality which physical science interprets, the reality which presents itself as the direct other to thought, is essentially identical with thought, and that thought in passing over to it finds itself. We understand nature because we find mind in nature, and only to the extent that we find mind in nature. Reality is not an outside which must be brought inside. The objectivity of science points to an opposition *within* thought, not to an opposition *to* thought.

The positivity of science which was proclaimed by Auguste Comte was not a naïve realism nor was it an appeal to common sense. It was a philosophical rejection of metaphysical knowledge, on the ground that it is unattainable in fact and useless as an ideal, and it was a philosophical denunciation of the transcendental method. On the other hand, the matter of the sciences was frankly accepted as phenomenological and the method of science as descriptive and constructive. It accepted Kant's account of phenomena, but had no use for his theory of noumena.

The philosophical value of Comte's *Cours de Philosophie positive* was not great; in a sense indeed it was negligible, but the effect of his principle and his formulation of what he called the law of the three stages was extraordinary, and has left its mark on the whole subsequent development of philosophy. All human attempts to explain the phenomena of nature pass, he declared, through three clearly marked stages, and these stages correspond to periods in the history of mankind: they are the theological, the metaphysical, and the positive. In the first, the direct causes of natural phenomena are attributed to the gods; in the second, to abstractions of thought and mentally constructed fictions; in the third, the search for causes is abandoned, and instead of hypostasizing noumena, phenomena are taken in their first intention. Positive science contents itself with observing uniformities, devising experiments, and obtaining the power to foretell natural events. Comte thereupon devoted himself, guided by this brilliant generalization, to the laborious task of arranging a classification or hierarchy of the positive sciences as a *Cours de philosophie.* Further, he conceived the ambitious design of investing science with the dignity of religion. He founded the Church of Humanity, surrounded it with ceremonial adornments, and fortified it with sacramental sanctions. The idea of a religion of humanity contributed, probably very materially, to the success of the philosophy in Catholic countries, but it had little attraction in the Protestant

countries, and with us it tended to cover the movement with ridicule. Quite apart, however, from the pontifical aims of its founder, the idea of a positivity of science, something quite distinct from philosophical realism, to which he had given expression, derived a new meaning and great driving force from the sciences themselves, which were at this time opening out and showing vigorous vitality.

Quite independently of Comte and outside his influence, there arose a philosopher in England who attracted universal attention and who seemed to be heralding a new era; this was Herbert Spencer. For half a century he was regarded as *par excellence* the philosopher of science and the champion of scientific method in philosophy, and, in our own country at least, he seemed to bear witness to the characteristic bent of the English mind towards empiricism and inductive method. Herbert Spencer's philosophy was conceived and its purpose planned before the momentous event of Darwin's publication of the *Origin of Species* in 1859. It was a philosophy of evolution, but of evolution in a more original meaning of the word than that which it came to acquire in the biological theories. It was the idea of an unfolding or development such as we witness in the growth of a plant or the maturing of an individual. It recalls Descartes's illustration of the whole of philosophy as a tree of knowledge of which the various sciences are the branches. The fundamental idea was that all the differentiations in the later expression or in the various stages of expansion were represented in the seed or germ. When evolution was proposed as an interpretative theory of the origin of species, it acquired a new and different meaning and presented a new aspect.

Darwin's theory of the origin of species by natural selection, consequent on a mathematical principle of a survival of the fittest in a struggle for existence, was of very great importance in philosophy, not because it cut away the ground of the religious belief in the Divine origin of man, created by God in His own image, nor because it offered a natural scientific alternative to the traditional belief in a special creation, but because it seemed to prove the possibility of banishing finalistic interpretation from all the sciences, bringing even life and mind within the scope of a purely mechanistic scheme.

The scientific fatalism of the nineteenth century presents a curious contrast to the theological fatalism which presented a problem to philosophy in the seventeenth century. The old

problem of free will had arisen out of the impossiblity of reconciling the attribute of omniscience in the Creator, with individual freedom of action in the creature. The new scientific determinism rests on a mechanistic conception of nature. Knowledge, in the modern conception of nature, implies a power, theoretically unlimited, of following present fact into future consequences. An omniscient mind contemplating our universe at the time when our solar system was a formless nebula, and possessed of the mechanistic key, would have been able by calculation to determine the actual state, say, of the fauna and flora of the planet, as it would exist in a specified year, just as surely and by the same method as an astronomer can foretell with precision the period of a future eclipse. There arose, however, a somewhat troublesome dilemma in regard to the mind itself, a dilemma which could never be satisfactorily resolved. The mind seemed as though it must be, and yet it was impossible that it could be, included in the scheme. It seemed as though it must be, for nothing can be left outside, and yet to include it is to conceive mind as part of that which it contemplates, and which it can only contemplate because it is itself outside it. A mind, in the words of a contemporary philosopher (Alexander) not only contemplates, it enjoys. Its enjoyment takes the form of æsthetic and emotional experience. Suppose, then, the superhuman calculator to succeed in foretelling the future disposition of the matter and energy of the world system from its state in the primitive nebula, can we suppose that he could be equally successful in foretelling the æsthetic and emotional qualities of that disposition in the experience of minds? Scientific determinism had no place for æsthetic or ethical or religious values. Its world was a system of purely mechanical movement. It might foretell the precise disturbances in the atmosphere caused by an orchestra at a particular time and place, but, in its view, the symphony of sound and its æsthetic qualities would be non-existent. Minds and their experience, it was clear, could not be classed with the phenomena of nature. The difficulty was surmounted by an ingenious theory. The mind, it was said, is no part of the contemplated order of nature, but an epiphenomenon. Mind is a supervening or adventitious effect which itself has no efficiency. It is non-interfering; it has no place in the chain of action and reciprocal reaction in which the real phenomena of the physical world are linked. A difficulty in this way of conceiving mind, however, soon made

itself apparent. The order of nature may be indifferent to mind, but there is, also, an order of mind. How are we to conceive the relation of two orders indifferent to one another and independent? Modern science found itself, in fact, confronted with the main metaphysical problem which had confronted the seventeenth-century philosophers, and it had recourse to the seventeenth-century philosophers for its solution. It adopted the hypothesis of psycho-physical parallelism. This had far-reaching consequences. It gave a new direction to philosophy. Philosophy became a science of psychology, running parallel with physical science, pursuing its own method, and based on the principle of the association of ideas. Philosophy, it seemed, could eschew metaphysics, could be distinctly positive and scientific in its method, and could recognize the claims of the sciences to constitute an order of nature mechanistically determined. The rôle assigned to it was the classification of the sciences, the criticism and justification of scientific method and the determination of the particular place of the different sciences in the hierarchy.

The leader and representative philosopher of the new tendency was John Stuart Mill. The movement prided itself on being characteristically English and on continuing the English tradition. Mill combined the inductive method of Bacon with the empirical principle of Locke and his followers. The scepticism of Hume was to be overcome, not by transcending experience in the manner of Kant, but by a more thorough and persistent effort of logical analysis rendered possible by the advance of science. Thus the challenge of Hume to validate the idea of necessary connection between matters of fact was to be met by a more diligent examination of the inferences from facts which might be expected to establish by induction the causal relation in nature itself; and the independent existence of the external world could be secured by the recognition of things or objects as the permanent possibilities of sensation. Mill was by far the greatest philosophical force in our country at a time when philosophy was at its lowest ebb. The success of science was producing a kind of intoxicating effect in the intellectual world, and, together with an unbounded confidence in scientific method, there was a curious feeling of finality in connection with it. The work of emancipation was accomplished. Much work still remained to be done, but there were no new worlds to discover. The coming generations of humanity would enter on and enjoy the possession of their scientific heritage. Mill was imbued with

the scientific spirit, yet he pursued insistently, and fixed the attention of his age on the philosophical problem of the nature of knowledge and the ground of its validity.

John Stuart Mill died in 1873, and in the same year appeared his *Autobiography*. The book produced in the religious world of that day a kind of electrifying effect. It had a startling aspect. Popular preachers everywhere discoursed on it, and seemed to find in its sad and depressing tone the ideal warning instance they required of the spiritual desolation of a godless creed and utilitarian morality.

The philosophic tendencies which are distinctive of contemporary thought, and to which we are subject to-day, take their origin from the reaction to the philosophic tendency represented by Mill. It was a vigorous reaction and soon became not merely a defensive movement against the scientific tendency, but a powerful reaffirmation of idealism against a materialistic science.

The reaction took the form of a revival of Hegelian idealism. The start of the new movement was the publication in 1865 of James Hutchison Stirling's *Secret of Hegel*. This was a vigorous and enthusiastic exposition of the Hegelian doctrine and method. The secret of Hegel, according to Stirling, was the idea of the concrete universal, an idea implicit in the Kantian philosophy, but explicit in Hegel. Critics, however, found Stirling's exposition difficult and obscure. It was wittily said that if he had really discovered Hegel's secret he had most successfully kept it. For my own part, I can only say that to me there has never appeared anything secret or occult in Hegel. The truth about Hegel is, that he saw with unsurpassed clearness the nature of the reality disclosed in human knowledge, yet it is necessary to add that the system which he constructed on his true principle is a monstrosity. Stirling's book, however, was sufficiently startling. It aroused a new interest in pure speculative philosophy. About the same time Stirling translated Schwegler's *History of Philosophy*. This was perhaps even more effectual, for it presented the basis of the Hegelian philosophy in the history of ideas, and it also presented the opposition of the different schools as a true dialectical progress of thought. Concentrated, condensed and penetrating, it contrasted with the popular *Biographical History of Philosophy* of George Henry Lewes, at that time widely read, written under the influence of the Positivism of Comte, and designed to demonstrate the futility and unsubstantiality of the results of purely rational speculation.

The new influence was strong also at Oxford. It found a leader in T. H. Green, who, in a joint edition with T. H. Grose of Hume's *Treatise*, wrote an introduction which contained a destructive criticism of the empirical method in philosophy. Green's positive theory was developed later in his *Prolegomena to Ethics*. It was the affirmation of a principle of freedom as the necessary postulate of ethical action. The particular form which he gave to this principle was critically rejected by F. H. Bradley, who refers to it in a phrase now almost classic as " a psychological monster." William Wallace's translation of Hegel's *Logic* enabled English students to study Hegel at first hand, and Edward Caird's writings were influential in the same direction. It was F. H. Bradley, however, who was to give the most vigorous expression to English idealism and determine its form for a generation. He represents undoubtedly the greatest intellectual force in English contemporary philosophy. His effective work consists of three books, *Ethical Studies* (1876), *Principles of Logic* (1883), *Appearance and Reality* (1893). His later work took the form of occasional articles, afterwards collected in *Essays on Truth and Reality* (1914). Bradley was a recluse, and, notwithstanding that his books were highly polemical and directed with fierce invective against the popular philosophy of the day, he himself took no part in propaganda or in the application of his principles to actual ethical, social and political problems. Bradley had a colleague, however, who recognized at once the intellectual force and bearing of the new theory; this was Bernard Bosanquet. Though they never collaborated the two names will always be linked in the closest association. Bosanquet developed and applied the logical principle and metaphysical doctrine, which Bradley had formulated, with crusading ardour.

The idealism of Bradley and Bosanquet is a vigorous reaffirmation of the Hegelian principle of a real agency in logic. Without adopting the full Hegelian maxim—what is real is rational and what is rational is real—it recognized in logic the driving force in human experience. It turned its back disdainfully on the formal logic of the associationist school of Mill with its abstract rules of induction. "Association marries only universals" was its startling counterblast. Its metaphysics was clear and unambiguous. Reality is experience. Experience is first an undifferentiated unity of feeling below thought; then a disruption of thought which distinguishes existence from its content, the *what* from the *that*; finally, a unity above thought, yet enriched by

it, an absolute experience in which contradictions are reconciled.

Probably no philosopher of our generation has proved so thought-provoking as Bradley in his dialectical arguments or so unconvincing in his positive conclusions. The reason is not far to seek. Scientific discovery has orientated the philosophical interest in a new direction. Positive science has raised definite metaphysical problems. As in the days of Descartes and Galileo, we are being called upon to adapt our minds to a revolution in our fundamental ideas as to the nature of the cosmos. In the biological sciences the principle of evolution has changed the whole scheme of what we used to call natural history. In the physical sciences the invention of the spectroscope has made possible for the first time a direct and intimate knowledge of the constitution of the physical universe, and the discovery has falsified all our preconceived ideas. Finally, the mathematical sciences have completely subverted the familiar notions of space and time on which, since Newton, astronomical measurements have been confidently based. Just as the Copernican discovery imposed on us the necessity of adapting ourselves to the veritable paradox of the Antipodes, so the still more fundamental discovery of Einstein is imposing on us to-day the far harder task of adapting ourselves to the greater paradox of universal relativity.

All the tendencies in contemporary philosophy have been influenced, whether individual philosophers have acknowledged it or not, by the scientific revolution. It is impossible that it should be otherwise, because what the new principle in science really challenges is the old universally accepted distinction between truths of reason and matters of fact. The barrier which has seemed to separate philosophy from the sciences is effectually broken down.

The last thirty years, which comprehends the most astonishing advance in scientific knowledge with the completest revolution in fundamental concepts, has been accompanied by three well-marked tendencies in philosophy: these are pragmatism, new realism, and new idealism. The terms "new realism" and "new idealism" are often objected to by the philosophers who are their exponents, but there are no other accepted class terms which draw attention to the characteristically modern scientific significance of the doctrines.

Pragmatism was an anti-intellectualist movement, appearing at first, in this country at least, as a strong reaction to the

Hegelianism of Bradley. It called itself personal idealism to emphasize its opposition to the theory of the absolute and the doctrine of degrees of reality. It carried the opposition to such an excess that it soon came to seem to be defending, under the banner of Protagoras, "man the measure of all things," an extreme subjectivism and undisciplined caprice. Its theory that truth is what works, that we do not discover what is true, but verify or make true, led to the idea of what was named a tychistic universe. Beneath its superficial extravagance, however, it was impossible not to see that it was emphasizing a principle which was finding abundant illustration and proving brilliantly successful in scientific research.

The positive counter-doctrine to intellectualism has not come, however, from the pragmatists, nor as a result of their frontal attack on formal logic, it has come from Bergson. The theory of creative evolution is a reasoned doctrine, free from the extravagances of pragmatism, because based on scientific principles and supported at every stage by an appeal to positive facts. Its far-reaching effects have been felt in science quite as definitely as in philosophy, and it bids fair to stand out as one of the distinctive achievements of human thought in our age. Creative evolution is not a systematic philosophy, it is a new interpretative principle of experience. It rejects the view that either the intellect which enables us to comprehend the material world or the material world which confronts the intellect is absolute or existent in its own right. Each is complementary to the other, and both are the outcome of a creative evolution. The intellect is a mode of conscious activity, and matter is the aspect the world assumes to it, and both intellect and matter are generated by the evolution of life. Life manifests itself in modes of activity to which correspond objective actions. Life itself is the spring or impulse of an inner force needing expression, a *vis a tergo*; it endures by new creation.

From this standpoint a wholly new method lies open to philosophy. Bergson names it intuition, and it is around this doctrine that the main controversy has ranged. The philosopher can and must make the effort to get for himself a direct and immediate view of the reality, from which the intellect has been formed, by a kind of nuclear condensation, as the means or instrument of accomplishing a particular kind of action. This intuition is possible, first, because the philosopher is himself, as it were, installed within the reality he lives and can therefore

view it from within; and, second, because the intellect itself reveals itself as one only among other and alternative modes of activity. Instinct, and even the completely unconscious mode of vegetable life, are, like the intellect, the outcome of one creative evolution.

If Bergson's theory has been mainly inspired by the problems of the biological sciences, the predominant interest of new realism is in physics and mathematics. Realism is primarily a theory of knowledge; it starts from the fact that the immediate objects of knowledge are sense-given, and it seeks to establish the identity of sense-data and the physically real entities which have external relations to one another. It aims, in the first place, at getting rid of any occasion for a representative theory of knowledge, that is, a theory which interposes ideas between the mind and its objects. It claims to avoid this necessity by rejecting the old distinction between ideas and things, and replacing it with the distinction between acts and objects. In the knowing relation, what is mental is always and only an apprehending act—sensing, perceiving, conceiving; what is non-mental is the object known—sensation, percept, concept. The physical world consists, therefore, of sense-data and relations; there are no intermediate entities with only an ideal existence, and no ultimate entities, minds or things, with an independent real existence. Above all, what the realist emphasizes is the objective character of the external world. The activity of the mind in all its acts is an activity of contemplation, not of interference; it is an awareness or a discerning of what already exists.

The movement which I have named new idealism is represented by the Italian philosophers of the Hegelian school, Benedetto Croce and Giovanni Gentile. It is in no sense an alternative theory of knowledge to that of the new realists, for it can hardly be said to come into contact with their theory or to be in the least disturbed by their problem. It approaches the problems of philosophy and conceives the task of philosophy from an entirely different standpoint. It starts with the actual reality of the human world as it is presented in art, in religion, in history in economical and social institutions, and in philosophy. This actual reality is *prima facie* and fundamentally spiritual. In its integrality it is mind or spirit. Scientific reality has its place in it. It is not, however, the basis out of which the human world has evolved and on which man has learnt to impose values; on the contrary, science is seen to be a purely abstract and mainly

artificial construction, having a practical end and narrowly economic value.

It was the æsthetic doctrine of Croce which gave the impetus to the new movement. It seemed to reconcile at last the long-standing opposition between the clear and distinct ideas of the understanding and the obscure and confused ideas of sense which had persisted throughout the modern period from Descartes to Kant and from Kant to present times. When we study a work of art—a painting on canvas, a sculptured stone, a poem in words, a symphony in sounds—we do not begin by studying the material —canvas, pigments, marble, sounds—in order to discover what they mean to the chemist or physicist. The essence of art is the intuition of the artist which he has found means in the material to express outwardly. The reality of art as art, what makes it art, is its ideality. Art is altogether spiritual, but the spirituality of art is of a distinctive kind and definite order. Art is the expression of an æsthetic, not of a logical, activity. It is the creation of images, not the creation of concepts. It is the first stage of what Croce distinguishes as theoretic from practical activity. Man is first an artist, he is also a philosopher, but art conditions and is not conditioned by philosophy. Mind or spirit expresses itself first in the creation of images—subjective, particular, individual; then in the creation of concepts—objective, concrete and universal.

Croce's contribution to philosophy is especially valuable from the fact, which he has explained in a short autobiographical memoir, that he was not drawn to it by any speculative interest nor actuated by academic motives. His reflections on art and literature and history, which have been his chosen subjects of research, led him to the philosophical problem. The result has been a complete philosophy of mind (*filosofia dello spirito*). Mind is conceived as pure activity and as inclusive reality, developing in itself a dialectical progression, not in triads like the Hegelian dialectic, but in comprehensive stages. He distinguishes the two-fold degree of a theoretic activity, æsthetic and logic, this theoretic activity being itself also the first degree of a practical activity with a twofold degree, economic and ethic. Mind is presented as a life completing itself in finding expression for four values, comprehended under the pure concepts: Beauty, Truth, Utility, Goodness.

The most important influence of the new idealism, so far as the fundamental metaphysical or ontological problem is concerned, is

the concept of history. We ordinarily think of history as a record of the past. We suppose the historian to be able, by his skill in interpreting records, to set forth events as they happened to the actors and as they presumably were observed by disinterested spectators. The idea underlying this conception of the historian's task in rehabilitating the past is, that every historical event, such, for example, as the assassination of Cæsar in the Senate House, contains a core of absolute, static, substantial reality, and that it is this reality, made by the past eternal and unchangeable, which the historian must disengage in its naked truth. According to the idealist view this is untenable. There was not in the past, and there is not in the present, any reality indifferent to the living activity of the individuals into whose experience it entered, and independent of it. Hence the paradox of the new idealism—the identity of history and philosophy. All reality is history and the historian presents to us not the past as it was but the past as it is, not something unchangeable but changing as we change. In the exposition of this concept the last remnant of the Cartesian dualism is eradicated from philosophy and the concept of pure activity is rationalized. Thus the death of Cæsar is not the reality of abstract fact, nor is it the truth of a definite proposition or set of propositions which can be stated with mathematical precision and accuracy as, for example, that at a certain moment in a certain definite place the heart of the man known as Cæsar ceased to beat. No accumulation of such facts is history, because for the historian the reality of Cæsar's death is its ideality. The records may be true records, but as abstract facts they have no independent meaning and no historical value. The past as past is action accomplished. It is what it was, unalterable. But in this aspect the past is unknowable. History is knowledge of the past, and this knowledge lives and grows in the present and draws its nourishment from the actual present.

It is the development of this idea of the complete ideality of history which especially characterizes the philosophy of Gentile. After long association with Croce he has ceased to collaborate with him, not on account of disagreement, but in order to give expression to a principle which diverges from Croce's theory in an important particular. Gentile finds embarrassment in the clear outlines and sharp contours of Croce's scheme of the twofold degrees. It seems to him to emphasize an individuality

which has no place in ultimate reality. His concept of reality is of a pure universality, the theory of mind as pure act. Croce has criticized his friend's doctrine as tending to a philosophical mysticism in which all real distinctions are lost. Gentile has defended his theory against this charge, perhaps successfully, but the two philosophers certainly illustrate in the divergence of their views the two main divergent lines in contemporary philosophy, one towards the affirmation of individuality and personality, towards a monadic concept, the other towards the transcendence of individuality and absorption in the absolute, towards a monistic concept.

The last influence in contemporary philosophy which I will mention in this survey is that which has come in recent years from the formulation and adoption in mathematics and physics of the principle of relativity. This principle seems to me to have the most important bearing on the problem to which I have just alluded, the problem of the meaning of individuality. Einstein's achievement is the demonstration of a working mathematical formula for the laws of nature, universally applicable in despite of our ignorance of an absolute system of reference and without the necessity of postulating one. His discovery is that the actual universe, the subject matter of physical science, only exists in and for observers in systems of reference moving relatively to one another. His principle is that each observer in such relatively moving system co-ordinates the universe from the individual standpoint of his own system to which he is attached and which he regards as a system at rest. It is the acceptance of this principle in science which seems to me to have brought a deciding influence to bear on the concept of individuality.

In conclusion, it may be that throughout this rapid survey of the influences which have determined and which are determining the directions of speculation since Hegel, I am myself influenced by my own predilections. No one is a disinterested spectator of time and eternity. When I try, however, to look at the problem of modern philosophy from the standpoint of its history, it appears to me as a conflict between two opposing principles which were first clearly formulated by Spinoza and Leibniz in the seventeenth century. One is monism : It has taken many forms, materialistic and spiritualistic, and in religion and ethics it tends to mysticism. The other is monadism : it is perhaps the more difficult of the two principles because it runs contrary to our

ordinary modes of thought, but it seems to me that it is being brought into clearer light by the direction in which scientific research is turning to-day.

Discussion.

The Chairman thanked Professor Wildon Carr for his paper. The lecturer had given of his best, and we owed him our highest gratitude. He would like to ask a thousand questions, but must content himself by asking one or two. In the history of philosophy we perceive that generally philosophers are either idealists or realists, Platonists or Aristotelians. In the nineteenth century Comte represented the realist tradition by his Positivism. Did Professor Carr think that Comte had made any permanent contribution to Philosophy? Hegel, he supposed, was in the Platonic tradition, which has been pushed still farther to-day by Benedetto Croce. Croce's philosophy of history was of special interest. The nineteenth century was confident that there could be an accurate science of history. Croce had demolished the pretension and made history relative to the historian's ideas. When we place this idealist view of history side by side with Einstein's Theory of Relativity, one wonders whether modern idealism has not been dissolved into a too thin monism. The Catholic Church had appropriated Plato during the first four centuries. Then followed a long period culminating in the thirteenth century, when St. Thomas Aquinas incorporated Aristotle into the Catholic tradition. In this way the Church retained the full values of idealism and realism. To-day we have the new realism represented by Mr. Bertrand Russell. Did Professor Carr think that the new idealism of Benedetto Croce might be balanced by the new realism of Mr. Bertrand Russell, and thus preserve for moderns a philosophy at once delicate and robust?

The Rev. J. J. B. Coles thought that an excellent selection had been made in this Review of Philosophic Tendencies since Hegel. Bergson's Creative Evolution and his teaching as to Intuition were valuable contributions to modern philosophical discussions.

Croce's concept of History brought to mind the striking peculiarity of the Hebrew verb in dealing with past records so as to make them part of the "living oracles" of God.

Einstein's Relativity, in connection with individuality and personality, showed how necessary it was to hold Transcendence as well as Immanence in our synthesis of knowledge.

Lieut.-Colonel G. MACKINLAY said : Dr. Carr is to be congratulated on his careful and condensed account of the various systems of philosophy which have been in fashion since the time of Hegel ; but the thought strikes me at once : What is the use of Philosophy ? It appears to be veiled in a special verbiage of its own, so that it is not easy to make out the meaning of its sentences, and this is the more remarkable in that philosophy is supposed to be a help in various studies, including religion. As far as I can see it generally confuses the issue, reminding one of notes published some time ago, explaining a certain widely-read book, I think the *Pilgrim's Progress*. A simple student was asked if he had read these notes, and if they had helped him to understand the book. He replied that he enjoyed the book and found it very interesting and easy to understand, and after further study he hoped to understand the notes also !

It seems that the occupation of the philosopher must not be taken away from him, even if his explanations are apt to be difficult and obscure, as our lecturer allows may at times be the case (*see* p. 215 (middle)).

In applying philosophy to matters connected with the Bible, we find the glorious note of certainty of doctrines and of well-established facts in the Scriptures is to be exchanged for extreme vagueness and changeability.

The author of our paper would seem to give his subject away by speaking of the *speculation* of the modern period, and by referring to the dogmatism of the seventeenth century and the empiricism of the eighteenth, as examples of the variations of philosophic teaching at different periods (*see* p. 209).

Our author makes sympathetic mention of the effect of recent scientific and mathematical investigations on philosophy of late, specially commending the fundamental discovery of Einstein. There is hope, therefore, that in the future philosophy will be supported by appeals to established facts and that it will not be content with mere speculation.

The bulk of the paper, however, refers to a study practised by the heathen Greeks of old, from whom it is derived ; it is still full of

ambiguities. It seems foolish to depend on such teaching when we have the infallible Scriptures, which give us the inspired Word of God testifying that the Lord Jesus is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and that He shed His blood to save those who trust in Him.

By all means let us investigate truth from various angles. I, for one, would be very glad if at some future time we could have a lecture in simple language which would enable us to understand the practical advantages, if any, which can be derived from a study of this intricate subject.

We live in a wonderful scientific and practical age. I should like to ask Dr. Carr if many of our leading inventors and scientific men, or of our successful politicans or captains of industry, owe their success to their knowledge of philosophy ?

Mr. W. E. LESLIE writes : Who has not, in attempting to unravel a tangled skein, found that each knot untied did but produce another elsewhere ? Philosophy has sometimes been regarded as just such a tangled skein. Such a view can be understood, if not justified, when one contemplates the changeful succession of schools and philosophers—Idealists and New Idealists, Realists and New Realists, the Monads of Leibnitz and the Monads of Wildon Carr, Einstein taking us back to the paradoxes of Zeno.

The movements referred to in the latter part of the paper (the work of James, Croce, Bergson and Einstein) render such pessimism unnecessary. In their more anti-intellectual aspects they present, no doubt, a swing of the pendulum, but regarded as introducing extra logical elements they show us something warmer, richer (more colourful), more personal, and therefore more real, than the arid intellectualism that preceded them. If an all-embracing synthesis be our aim, surely these movements give a distinct advance !

Of course, considered as anti-intellectualistic, these movements are exposed to the objection that they destroy the foundation upon which they rest. However they may congratulate themselves upon a fancied immunity from logical dialectic, there is no escape from the fact that their position is a product of reflection.

No doubt philosophers are making progress toward some orderly arrangement of their new wealth, but on less exalted levels confusion

is rife. Among people of mystic temperament the feeling that the intellect has a subordinate place has (particularly in America) opened the floodgates to a tide of superstition and quackery.

The Victoria Institute is interested in metaphysical questions from the standpoint of Christian Philosophy. Divine Revelation presents striking points of contact with these recent movements of thought as, indeed, it did with the earlier outlook of the Fathers and the Schoolmen. Life, activity, personality, freedom and beauty are now stressed. Revelation does not present us with formal series of metaphysical propositions, but has been transacted through living persons—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob; Moses and Isaiah; Ruth and Naomi. "Life" is prominent—"I am come that they might have life"—but it is associated with knowledge: "This is Life Eternal, that they should know Thee. . . ." Knowledge is associated with practical moral values: "If any man willeth to do His will he shall know . . ." Ethics and æsthetics are blended: "Worship the Lord in the beauty of Holiness." "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God!" Yet He has hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes!

Dr. SCHOFIELD writes: I have read with pleasure Dr. Carr's able review of recent philosophy, and venture to send one or two brief notes on the latter part of the paper.

The presentment (p. 218) of Dr. Bergson's creative evolution is certainly a long way removed, and in the right direction, from Darwin's theories, now so generally discredited.

The *vis a tergo* is a fact, and it only remains to give it its true name to make it a Christian doctrine.

The allusion (p. 219) to Croce and Gentile is interesting as to Monism, of which Gentile seems the soundest exponent. In my day Hæckel was still listened to, and the Monism then popular was entirely material. It was from this Conan Doyle was delivered—not, alas! into Christianity, but into spiritualistic Deism.

Since then Monism has again taken the field, but is now purely spiritual, matter itself having disappeared into mere "force and energy." This is nearer to Gentile than to Croce. This latter considers (p. 220) the æsthetic older than the intellectual—the image prior to the concept.

This is true if we give concept its full intellectual value ; but surely the simplest image in art cannot be formed without some elementary concept! Whence it would seem that the distinction is not so absolute as it appears.

Einstein's doctrine (p. 222) of the relative seems to me true in essence, and of great value, emphasizing as it does the impassable gulf between the *finite* and the *infinite*, the relative and the absolute, between man and God.

In his reply, Dr. CARR said, in answer to the Chairman's questions, that in his view the influence of Comte appeared rather in the direction it had given to philosophical development than in the enrichment of philosophy by new ideas. With regard to Croce's philosophy, it did undoubtedly continue the Hegelian tradition, but it represented a radical reform of the Hegelian dialectic.

He thanked Lieut.-Colonel Mackinlay for stating so plainly his view that philosophy is an idle pursuit. He could only say in defence that, for his own part, he had no choice in the matter ; he was a philosopher because he found it was in his nature to philosophize.

In conclusion, he thanked all who had sent communications or spoken. To attempt to follow the many valuable criticisms would carry him beyond the limits of discussion.